THE EFFECT OF MILKING TECHNOLOGY ON THE BEHAVIOUR PATTERN OF DAIRY COWS

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Animals react on environmental effects with the changes of their behaviour. In case of major negative effects production loss will be the response. It is extremely important on daily cattle farms since when milk production falls back it means significant economic consequences. That is the reason why it is vital to observe behavioural differences. Unfamiliar humans and any technical novelty might appear as threat for the dairy cattle, and trigger fear in the animals. Fear can make handling and milking harder and it can also delay milk let-down and reduce milk yields. In general, usually the following behaviour traits can be examined in dairy cattle: communication, aggression and social structure, biological rhythm, sexual behaviour, food and water intake (etc.). All the above can have an impact on the production level. The parameters of rest, movement and habits of the animals are analysed. Flinch, step, and/or kick (FSK) score has been considered as an indicator of comfort/discomfort while the milking unit is on the cow.

Research has been carried out on the following topics: Differences between feeding and milking behaviour a conventional milking parlour or automatic milking system; Stepping and kicking behaviour during milking in relation to response in human–animal interaction; Individual differences in behavioural and physiological responsiveness of dairy cows to machine milking; etc.

Our goal was to present the results of this research, highlighting the effect of milking technology on the behaviour pattern of dairy cows.